

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: 04/19/2018

Agenda Item: ARM Amendments to No Wake Restrictions on the Missouri River in Great Falls

Division: Enforcement

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 Minutes

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Background The Commission proposed language amending establishing a no wake zone near Broadwater Bay on the Missouri River from the western shore from the Warden Bridge on 10th Avenue to the Burlington Northern Railway Bridge No. 119.4 from May 1 to September 30. The original ARM rule which was adopted in 1983 restricting motorized use on this section of the Missouri River from the Warden Bridge to the take-out facility at Odd-Fellows Park as posted. It appears that this ARM rule has never been implemented on Broadwater Bay and there is confusion on what “as posted” means. The proposed amendments remove the obsolete language regarding no motorized use and establish a 200 foot no wake zone on the western shore line between the two bridges to protect private and public property. FWP coordinated with the City of Great Falls and landowners on the shoreline to develop the rule language proposed by the Commission.

Public Involvement Process & Results The public comment period on the rule amendments was from October 30, 2017 to December 8, 2017 and a public hearing was held on December 5, 2017. The Commission received public comments for and against the proposed amendments. Public comment in support of the proposed amendments stated the amendments address a safety issue, the area is multiple use and should be managed as such, erosion is a problem along the banks of the river, and boat technology (wake boats and larger boats) are creating waves that result in property damage and erosion on the west bank. Comments opposed to the amendments stated the amendments will not prevent erosion, will increase congestion in portions of the river, will set a bad precedence, and there isn't a problem and the rules are unnecessary.

Alternatives and Analysis

- 1) Adopt the rule language as proposed. This alternative address property owner concerns expressed to FWP, will provide ample travel area for larger boats and safe zone for nonmotorized water craft.
- 2) Not adopt the rule language and keep existing language.
 - Pros- Segment of the population is very happy with the current rule.
 - Cons- Still does not address the no wake issue.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale FWP recommends adopting the rule language as proposed:

- 1) Broadwater Bay is located within the city limits of Great Falls which has a population of approximately 58,000 people. This area is heavily used during the summer months by all sorts of water based recreators. This use will only increase with the improvements that have been made to the parking lots and boat ramps.
- 2) The proposed no wake zone includes the intersection of the Sun River and the Missouri River. The proposed no wake zone will allow for safe exit and entrance to these rivers.
- 3) The no wake proposal will only be in effect on the west shoreline of Broadwater Bay and water based recreators can continue to use the east side of the river as they always have.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the rule language establishing a no wake zone on the Missouri River near Broadwater Bay as proposed.